

Evaluation

For information regarding specific South Dakota eligibility criteria refer to the technical assistance guide, [“Determining Eligibility for Special Education in South Dakota”](#).

1. Should you list the names of tests and who will be administering the test on the prior notice/consent to evaluate? How do you know what tests need to be listed?

After the district determines what potential disability category(s) the student may be eligible under, the technical assistance guide [“Determining Eligibility for Special Education in South Dakota”](#) tells what areas need to be assessed. By listing the “areas to be assessed” from the eligibility guide on the prior notice/consent, the district can ensure the student will receive a comprehensive evaluation in all areas of suspected disability. Listing the specific name of the test/s and the evaluator limits the district to use only those tests which have been listed and only the stated evaluators.

2. Can you just list math, reading, and not write in achievement on prior notice?

Yes. This will limit the districts ability to evaluate in any other areas without acquiring additional parent consent. For SLD eligibility the district may choose to specifically determine whether they are evaluating Basic Reading, Reading Comprehension, Reading Fluency, Math Reasoning, and/or Math Calculation.

3. If you put achievement on the prior notice, do you have to test all of the areas?

No. However, the district is required to conduct a comprehensive evaluation in all areas of suspected disability.

4. Does the Vineland meet the requirements for the social skills portion of the evaluation requirement for cognitive delay? Does a typical adaptive test cover the area of social skills? Which adaptive tests do not cover social skills?

The Vineland evaluates the social and adaptive areas which are required when the district is suspecting a cognitive disability. The evaluator must refer to the test producers manual to determine if the domain scores are valid and reliable. Refer to the document [“Determining Eligibility for Special Education in South Dakota”](#) for a more extensive list of social skill evaluation tools. The Vineland-II is an adaptive behavior assessment. A separate social skills assessment should be used during the assessment.

5. If you received permission to evaluate for a suspected learning disability and the child scores a 70 on the IQ leading you to believe other eligibility categories need to be evaluated, what do you do?

In such a situation the district will need to obtain a second prior notice/consent from the parent to evaluate the child’s adaptive behavior and social skills to determine if the student meets all the criteria for cognitive disability.

6. Can you pull forward previous test scores to determine continued eligibility during reevaluation? How do you pull forward assessments at the high school level?

It has been an approved practice to pull forward the most recent intellectual ability score as long as there are two stable intellectual ability evaluation scores. Talk to your school psychologist regarding the stability of the scores and contact the parents to determine whether they want their child's intellectual ability reevaluated during the upcoming reevaluation. Should the student be in the 12th grade, it is advised that a current adult intellectual ability evaluation be completed to determine whether the student is eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services or acceptance to a residential program. The prior notice/consent form is the document used to inform parents of what areas will be evaluated and what previous evaluation scores will be pulled forward. When pulling forward any previous evaluation information document the evaluation area and the date the evaluation was administered on the prior notice/consent form.

7. Can you use all scores from past years to determine continued eligibility?

Scores and test results in the areas of achievement, social, adaptive, behavior, language, and articulation change with the child's age and development; therefore, the team needs to consider administering current testing when determining continued eligibility.

8. If the information received from the medical community is incomplete, can the district initiate their own evaluation procedures?

It is the district's responsibility to meet all of the requirements for conducting an appropriate evaluation. When determining if a child is a child with a disability, the district must have all the evaluation information in the student's file to support the disability.

9. When is parental input required?

Parents need to be involved in and provide input throughout the entire special education process. Specifically, the district must document parent input during the evaluation process (i.e. draw upon information from a variety of sources, including aptitude and achievement tests, parent input...). Once the district determines what categories of disability the student may be eligible, the prior notice/consent form is used to document the areas of evaluation necessary to determine eligibility. The district contacts the parent to review the evaluation package and determine if other areas of assessment need to be included on the Prior Notice/Consent document. The Prior Notice/Consent is then sent to the parent for signature.

Parent input must be solicited and documented in the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance.

10. Is parent input just in the selection of the evaluations or is it in the content of the evaluations?

The IEP team, which includes the parents, makes the determination of needed evaluation data. They shall:

- 1) Review existing evaluation data on the child, including:
 - (a) Evaluations and information provided by the parents of the child;
 - (b) Current classroom-based local or state assessments and observations;
- and

- (c) Observations by teachers and related services providers; and
- 2) Based on the above review and input from the student's parents, identify what additional data, if any, are needed to determine:
 - (a) Whether the student has a particular category of disability as described in this article;
 - (b) The present levels of performance and educational needs of the student; and
 - (c) Whether the student needs special education and related services.

11. How do you document functional assessment?

The district shall ensure that a variety of assessment tools and strategies are used to gather relevant functional, developmental, and academic information about the child, including information provided by the parents, for the purpose of determining eligibility and developing the IEP. All evaluation information including functional assessment must be summarized into a written report which can be given to the parents prior to or at the IEP meeting. It is recommended the report be formatted in a manner that identifies the child's skill areas affected by the disability and the accompanying strengths and needs in each area.

12. When a child turns 6 years old, what do you do for evaluation? What if the student has been eligible only under speech?

Upon turning 6 years old a student who had been identified with a disability in the area of developmental delay must meet the eligibility requirements under one of the other 13 disability categories in order to continue to receive special education services. Prior to the child turning 6 years old, the district needs to determine under what category of disability the child may be eligible. The district must follow reevaluation procedures and determine if the child continues to be an eligible child.

If the preschool child had been identified with a speech and language disability at the age of 4 years old, the district does not need to reevaluate until their 3 year reevaluation is due because speech is one of the 13 disability categories. The requirement to reevaluate prior to turning six years old specifically applies to children in the developmental delay category.

13. What does a district need for a diagnosis for ADD/ADHD?

If the impairment to learning is a result of a psychiatric disorder as defined in the DSM-IV and/or DSM-TR, such as ADHD, a physician, certified school psychologist, or licensed professional qualified to determine such disorders, may provide the diagnosis. Behavior assessments must be administered to validate the diagnosis.

The Office of Special Education, ADHD Resource, May 2003, states: *Part B of IDEA does not necessarily require a school district to conduct a medical evaluation for the purpose of determining whether a child has ADHD. If a public agency believes that a medical evaluation by a licensed physician is needed as part of the evaluation to determine whether a child suspected of having ADHD meets the eligibility criteria of the OHI category, or any other disability category under Part B, the school district must*

ensure that this evaluation is conducted at no cost to the parents. (OSEP Letter to Michel Williams, March 14, 1994, 21 IDELR 73).

14. If a behavior evaluation is necessary for determining eligibility (i.e. Other Health Impaired) the checklist should be completed by whom?

Information needs to be gathered from at least two individuals who know or are familiar with the student. Typically one is the student's parent or care giver and the other is the student's teacher.

15. If a doctor says a child needs OT, does the school have to provide it?

First, the child must have been evaluated and determined eligible for special education under one of the 14 disability categories. Second, a skill area affected by the disability that is addressed in the child program (annual goals) must relate to the need for a particular related service. If the related service needed for the child to benefit from the program is Occupational or Physical Therapy, the evaluation scores must meet the State adopted criteria as defined in ARSD 24:05:27:23.- Criteria for occupational therapy and ARSD 24:05:27:25. - Criteria for physical therapy.

16. How do you get evaluations from outside agencies?

The parent may have a copy to share with the district; otherwise, the district must acquire a parent's written consent for a release of information, which the district can send to the agency.

17. What are some tests that can be used for reading fluency?

The KTEA-II and the GORT-4 may be used for reading fluency. The WJ-111 also has a subtest to measure fluency however; the user would need to check the subtest reliability for the age of the child. In addition, catalogs having special education assessments also sell reading fluency assessments.

18. Where do I get functional assessment information when it is not the reevaluation year?

When conducting an initial or a reevaluation, the evaluation team needs to identify the student's skills at their current age/grade level based upon the general curriculum as well as the skills they should be accomplishing at their appropriate age/grade level. When gathering functional assessment data and writing the report, list the skills the student needs to gain to close the gap between where they are and where they need to be. This will give the IEP team direction for planning annual goals until the next reevaluation is due. Refer to the updated Functional Assessments document on the SEP website. It provides a list of functional assessments that may be given for initial and reevaluation.

19. If a student is being assessed and the cognitive score is 70 or below, does one need to get consent to assess the student's adaptive behavior?

If adaptive behavior and social skills assessments were not included on the original prior notice/consent the parent signed, another prior notice/consent for assessing the student's adaptive behavior and social skills must be sent to the parent.

20. Do you complete an eligibility document when you reevaluate a child who moved in from out of state?

Eligibility must be documented following an initial evaluation, reevaluation or at any time the child's category of disability is changed by the IEP team.

21. If a district chooses to hold a meeting to determine what evaluations are necessary for a student's comprehensive evaluation, who must be in attendance?

The regulations do not require a "meeting" be held to make this decision. Membership at such a meeting would be addressed through district policy/procedure.